CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2017 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

INTRODUCTION

If nothing else, most of us can appreciate the differences, at least in practice, between *classically* and *modern*-styled wines. There's no doubt that these terms are oversimplifications of reality, a binary hearkening to a more simple, nostalgic time. Our minds yearn to simplify the complex, which is why there's comparatively little active discusion, but typically puzzled looks, over arguably one of the most important virtues in wine and winemaking: *restraint*. Restraint may seem counterintuitive given its physical connotation, but its undoubtedly one of the hallmarks of Montelena wine. It pushes us to focus on the details, to concentrate on purity, understatement, and the fundametals, which amusingly, are manifested in the glass as complexity of flavor and the development of the wine during ageing. It's choosing the right color for subtlety rather than simply more colors to paint with. And it's the understanding that every component of that vintage, from the craggy hillsides to the gravelly alluvium, has to be at its very best and contribute to a wine that is much greater as a whole than the sum of its parts.

VINTAGE WEATHER

Plentiful winter rains saturated the soil ahead of a pleasant, moderate spring. The vines responded fittingly with abundant green growth heading into summer. June arrived with periods of warmth punctuated by short bursts of intense heat, which continued through the remainder of the growing season. These somewhat erratic conditions present logistical challenges in the vineyard as careful monitoring of sun exposure and vine health become paramount. But, more importantly, these vintage characteristics provided ample opportunity for those of us watching carefully to harvest fruit with a dizzying diversity of flavors and textures.

NOSE

Cocoa, raspberry jam, and dried fig highlight a bright, fresh nose that quickly settles into a steady parade of baking spices, black pepper, and earth.

PALATE

Deceptively soft initially, the wine builds with its viscosity and concentration amidst layers of ripe plum, very fine tannins, and espresso bean. A lively ginger note adds a touch of spice, bolstered by dried cherry, tobacco, and fresh bright cranberries.

FINISH

The finish is laser-focused, mineral-driven and persistent, not unexpected in young Cabernet. Delicious now, it will add breadth and polish with time in glass.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES
September 8 – October 9

ALCOHOL
13.6%

BLEND
79% Cabernet Sauvignon
21% Merlot

BARREL AGING
16 months in French and Eastern European oak, 30% new

BOTTLING DATE
April 2019

RELEASE DATE
Spring 2019

WINEMAKER
Matt Crafton

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